



**Press Release
12 March 2010**

Australian travel wholesalers to visit Central Otago

Five Australian travel wholesalers will get to experience a taste of Central Otago food and wine, as part of a five day visit to three New Zealand regions at the end of March. The travel wholesalers will overnight and spend a half day in Central Otago.

'This is a great result, as it's the first time a group of travel wholesalers from Australia have got to experience a little of our region on a Tourism New Zealand led visit, and this builds on the feature article on Central Otago in the latest edition of *'Delicious'* magazine by Matt Preston, MasterChef Australia judge and internationally acclaimed food critic and journalist', says Michelle Kinney, Tourism Central Otago (TCO).

'TCO has coordinated their itinerary for Central Otago and will co-host the group with Tourism New Zealand while they are here', says Ms Kinney.

Four of the five travel wholesalers were recently updated on the unique features of Central Otago by Ms Kinney at a Tourism New Zealand workshop and trade day held in Sydney in early March.

Current Australian statistics as supplied by Statistics New Zealand and Tourism New Zealand:

- *International visitors from Australia (33%), the UK (20%) and the US (16%) are the largest share of all international visitors to wineries.*
- *Visitor arrivals from Australia to New Zealand are up 15.7% to 13,000 for January 2010, compared with January 2009.*
- *70% of Australian visitors to New Zealand are repeat visitors.*
- *Average length of stay is between 9 -13 days.*
- *The average spend per person for the Australian visitor is approximately \$1,800.*

For more information, contact:

Michelle Kinney
Tourism Manager Product Development
Tourism Central Otago
T: (03) 440 0645
M: 0275 978 444
E: michelle.kinney@codc.govt.nz